



PEDRO E. SEGARRA
MAYOR

**Testimony by Mayor Pedro E. Segarra
City of Hartford
Appropriations Committee Public Hearing re: Governor's Proposed Budget
In Support of the Commission on Children
February 19, 2013 at 6:30PM in Room 2C**

Co-Chairs Harp and Walker, Vice-Chairs Hartley, Flexer, Miller and O'Brien, Ranking Members Kane and Miner and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Commission on Children and the strong partnership that has developed between this important entity and Connecticut's Capital City. The Commission and its dedicated staff have been instrumental partners in many of the City's major initiatives, including the newly created *Hartford Blueprint for Maternal and Child Care Committee*, the *Hartford Blueprint for Early Care and Education*, the *Hartford Youth Advisory Council*, *Opportunities Hartford*, *The Hartford Family Civics Initiative*, the *Childhood Wellness Coalition*, the *Hartford Parent University* and the recently launched *Hartford Aligns* project.

The Commission's passion, expertise, and national reputation help raise the profile of the work we do together on behalf of Hartford's residents. It has often been a spark of inspiration for creatively addressing complex social needs with research-based strategies. Working together, we have been able to secure additional grant funding to make our thoughtful plans a reality.

The Commission on Children is a national leader in promoting and encouraging parent leadership and we have benefited immensely from their mentoring. In fact, because of their tireless efforts, we now receive credit as a model city for our family civics continuum. They are also a leader in integrating home visitation, early childhood development and fatherhood engagement – perhaps the most critical element in ensuring positive and sustainable family development.

Like none other, they bring policies and diverse constituents together and understand the dynamic between policies and programs to ensure optimal developmental outcomes. They have national ties with the best experts in family and child policy, ranging from the world's most renowned research expert on bullying, Dan Olweus in Sweden, to childhood obesity specialists Marian Wright Edelman and Morgan Spurlock. Their ability to make these leaders available to us – and others throughout the state – is an ability that few organizations have and should not be tinkered with.

The Commission's work is essential and they will be marginalized, reduced (or completely foregone) resources and their overall impact will be greatly diminished if they are consolidated with another organization or entity. The Commission on Children is focused on creating better outcomes for all Connecticut's children. The results of their work are evident here in Hartford and across our state. I encourage you to honor the work of the Commission and leave it positioned as a strong and independent voice for children.

I thank you for the special opportunity to submit this important testimony in support of the Commission and Children and stand ready to answer any and all questions that you might have regarding their critical work in Hartford and throughout the State of Connecticut.

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